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Transcripts Tied To Jeffries Had Strategic Data

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The classified transcripts allegedly delivered to the Soviet Union by accused spy Randy Miles Jeffries came from a congressional hearing that included discussion of U.S. nuclear war fighting plans, operating areas of Trident submarines in the Pacific Ocean and the vulnerability of U.S. computer and telephone systems to Soviet eavesdropping, according to a declassified version of the session.

Jeffries told an FBI undercover agent posing as a Soviet representative that he had given the Russians at least 13 "sample" pages of the hearing transcript, which was classified top secret, an FBI agent testified Tuesday. Agent Michael Giglia said the hearing took place before a House Armed Services subcommittee. Sources identified it as a 2½-hour session on Feb. 28.

The declassified version of the hearing runs 85 pages, including charts, but there is no way of determining whether the pages Jeffries allegedly passed to the Soviets contained the most sensitive information, or how sensitive any of the deleted information actually was.

However, the declassified report, with numerous passages deleted, touches on some of the military's most sensitive programs and plans. Donald C. Latham, assistant secretary of Defense for command, control, communications and intelligence, testified on the comparative nuclear strengths of the United States and the Soviet Union, the vulnerability of military satellites and the capability of U.S. coastal radar to track Soviet cruise missiles.

Obtaining the entire hearing

transcript, one source familiar with the contents of the hearing said, would have been "a significant coup for the Russians."

Jeffries offered to sell a "complete package" of three hearing transcripts, including two others classified secret, for \$5,000, Giglia testified. He said Jeffries described two meetings with the Soviets, at which he gave them 13 pages from each of the three hearings and an additional 15 pages of unspecified transcripts.

Jeffries allegedly obtained the transcripts from Acme Reporting Co., where he worked as a messenger. Acme has a contract with the House Armed Services Committee and several other committees to

transcribe hearings for them when none of the 12 reporters on the House staff is available.

House General Counsel Steven Ross said yesterday he would "very likely" recommend, at least as an interim measure, that all House hearings on classified matters be transcribed by stenographers on the House staff rather than by outside firms such as Acme.

Ross said he plans to issue interim recommendations on security procedures by the time Congress reconvenes Jan. 20 after its holiday recess.

He said that "a matter of days before" Jeffries allegedly stole a stack of classified documents from the company, Defense Department investigators visited Acme and "gave them a clean bill of health."

"If they were there that recently, there was a systemic problem," Ross said. "Either Acme was going out of its way to fool [the inspectors], or the level of inspection that was being done was inadequate. I have no indication that Acme was going out of their way to fool people."

Dale Hartig, a spokesman for the Defense Investigative Service, which conducts reviews of companies cleared to handle classified information, said it would be improper to comment on security at Acme while the case against Jeffries is pending. He said the company will be reinspected.

The hearing before the House Armed Services subcommittee on procurement and military nuclear systems included an assessment of

the overall state of U.S. tactical and strategic communications, the capabilities and limitations of existing systems and plans, and funding levels for new command, control, communications and intelligence programs.

Command, control, communications and intelligence (referred to as C³I, pronounced *cee-cubed-eye*) is one of the military's most secret program areas and a top priority in the nuclear field of the Reagan administration, which has spent billions of dollars modernizing the system.

The subcommittee hearing, headed by Rep. Samuel S. Stratton (D-N.Y.), was held in closed session. In a normal procedure for such hearings, the committee released a "sanitized" transcript of the hearing in the fall after Defense Department and congressional officials struck all sections containing classified information.

Much of the testimony surrounding the deletions concerns systems still in development that would improve U.S. commanders' ability to communicate with nuclear submarines, missile silos and bombers after a Soviet nuclear attack.

At one point, for example, Latham discussed the potential of "blue-green lasers," a system still in the research stage that might allow satellites to communicate with hidden submarines by sending pulses of light from space through the ocean.

He said: "If that can be proven to work, we probably would deploy that, assuming we could somehow

make that satellite system survivable. [Deleted.]”

Part of Latham's testimony focused on the request to finance acquisition of a new aircraft, the E6A, a Navy plane designed to improve communications with missile-carrying submarines. Latham discussed basing for the new jets, the distance Trident submarines could travel and still be reachable from the new planes, and how many E6As the Navy eventually hopes to buy.

Deleted portions of the hearing also touched on the Advanced Self-Protection Jamming System, a program under development for Navy and Air Force planes to foil enemy radar; a new secure telephone system; and the ability of the Global Positioning System, a military satellite network now in production, to function even if partly destroyed by nuclear attack.

*Staff writer Waller Pincus
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